

## Lady Duff-Gordon Tells of Sinking of Great Liner

### *Denver Post*

Friday 19 April 1912

Lady Duff-Gordon dictated the following: I was asleep. The night was perfectly clear. I was awakened by a long grinding sort of shock. It was not a tremendous crash, but more as though someone had drawn a giant finger all along the side of the boat. I awakened my husband and told him that I thought that we had struck something. There was no excitement that I could hear. My husband went on deck and told me that we had hit a big iceberg but there seemed to be no danger. We were not assured of this, however, and Sir Cosmo went upstairs again. He came back to me and said: "You had better put your clothes on, because I heard them give orders to strip the boats." We each put on a life preserver and over mine I threw some heavy furs. I took a few trinkets and we went up to the decks. There was not excitement at that time. The ship had listed slightly to port and was down a little at the head. As we stood there, one of the officers came rushing and said: "The women and children are to go in the boats." No one apparently thought there was any danger. We watched a number of women and children and some men going into the lifeboats. At last one of the officers came to me and said: "Lady Gordon, you had better go in one of the boats." I said to my husband: "Well, we might as well take the boat, although I think it will be only a little pleasure excursion until morning." The boat was the twelfth or thirteenth to be launched. It was the captain's special boat. There was still no excitement. Five stokers got in and two Americans, A. L. Salomon, whose address is No. 245 Broadway, New York City, and C. W. Stengel of Newark. Besides these there were two of the crew, Sir Cosmo, myself and a Miss Frank, an English girl. There were a number of other passengers, mostly men, standing nearby and they joked with us because we were going out on the ocean. "The ship can't sink," said one of them. "You will get your death of cold out there in the ice." We were slung off and the stokers began to row us away. For two hours we cruised around. It did not seem to be very cold. There was no excitement aboard the Titanic. We were probably a mile away. Suddenly, I clutched the sides of the lifeboat. I had seen the Titanic give a curious shiver. Almost immediately we heard several pistol shots and a great screaming arise from the decks. Then the boat's stern lifted in the air and there was a tremendous explosion. After this the Titanic dropped back again. The awful screaming continued. Two minutes after this there was another great explosion. The whole forward part of the great liner dropped down under the waves. The stern rose a hundred feet almost perpendicularly. The screaming was agonising. I never heard such a continued chorus of utter despair and agony. The great power of the Titanic slowly sank as though a great hand was pushing it gently down under the waves. As it went the screaming of the poor souls left on board seemed to grow louder. It took the Titanic perhaps two minutes to sink after the last explosion. It went down slowly without a ripple. We had heard of the danger of suction when one of these great liners sinks. There was no such thing about the sinking of the Titanic. The amazing part of it all to me as I sat there in the boat looking at this monster being destroyed was that it all could be accomplished so gently. Then began the real agonies of the night. Up to that time no one in our boat, and I imagine no one on any of the other boats, had really thought that the Titanic was going to sink. For a moment an awful silence seemed to hang over all, and then from the water all about where the Titanic had been arose a bedlam of shrieks and cries. There were men and women clinging to the bits of wreckage in the icy water. It was at least an hour before the last shrieks died out. I remember the very last cry was that a man had been calling loudly: "My God! My God!" He cried monotonously in a dull, hopeless way. For an entire hour there had been an awful chorus of shrieks, gradually dying into a hopeless moan until this last cry that I speak of. Then all was silent.

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